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Searching the Evidence

Searching the Evidence in the Cochrane Library



Searching the Evidence



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To help you use this guide,



indicates a step in the process of searching and retrieving articles.



indicates a tip, or an extra piece of information.

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This guide was produced by Deborah Lepley & Isla Kuhn on behalf of EEHIST:

East of England Healthcare Information Skills Trainers

1. How to access The Cochrane Library – and what is it?

The Cochrane Library is a unique source of reliable and up-to-date information on the effects of interventions in health care. Produced by the Cochrane Collaboration, it is updated quarterly and designed to provide information and evidence to support decisions taken in health care.

Cochrane Systematic Reviews are widely regarded as the "Gold Standard" of evidence based healthcare

Access is free and available via:

www.thecochranelibrary.com and also via the link on www.eel.nhs.uk

The Cochrane Library database is made up of 6 separate databases - you can browse or search them individually or search across them all at once.



Cochrane Database	Full text systematic reviews of health care interventions. Authors
of Systematic	locate, appraise and synthesise evidence from scientific studies.
Reviews	The conclusions are summarised, providing a unique collation of
	the known evidence on a given topic. Protocol (in progress)
	reviews are available in addition to full reviews.
Other Reviews	Includes structured abstracts of systematic reviews. Only reviews
	that meet minimum quality criteria are included. These reviews
	cover topics that have yet to be addressed in Cochrane reviews.
Cochrane Central	Major index of published clinical trials.
Register of	
Controlled Trials	
Methods Studies	Full-text systematic reviews of methodological studies.
Technology	Ongoing projects and completed publications from health
Assessment	technology assessment organisations.
Economic	Structured abstracts of articles describing economic evaluations
Evaluations	of health care interventions. Papers are included if they provide a
	comparison of treatments and examine both the costs and
	outcomes of the alternatives.

2. Browsing for Systematic Reviews a) By Subject



Starting at the home page, to browse Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews by topic area, select "Browse by Topic" from the Cochrane Reviews drop-down menu. Make your selection from the broad subject areas listed.

After you've made your selection, you're offered other options within that subject area in order to focus your choice.

BROWSE COCHRANE DATABASE OF SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS

Issue 9 of 12, Sept 2012 | Contents

BROWSE BY TOPICS

Anaesthesia & pain control (205)

Blood disorders (120)

Cancer (402)

Child health (1467)

Complementary & alternative medicine (543)

Consumer & communication strategies (52)

Dentistry & oral health (132)

Developmental, psychosocial, & learning problems (102)

Ear, nose, & throat (126)

Cancer (12)

Ear (52)

Larynx (12)

Nose & sinus (37)

Allergic rhinitis (8)

Common cold & cough (16)

Nasal polyps (2)

Nosebleed (1)

Other nose & sinus disorders (3)

Sinusitis (7)

Pharvnx (15)

Effective practice/health systems (122)

Endocrine & metabolic (101)

Eyes & vision (103)

Gastroenterology (368)

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<u>Developmental, psychosocial, & learning</u> <u>problems</u> (102)

Expand =

For none 0 throat /1961

Other Browse Options

The following is the result of browsing from "Ear, Nose & Throat" to "Nose & Sinus" to "Common cold & cough" to see a list of Cochrane Systematic Reviews.

COCHRANE REVIEWS: COMMON COLD & COUGH

Acetylcysteine and carbocysteine for acute upper and lower respiratory tract infections in paediatric patients without chronic bronchopulmonary disease

Antibiotics for the common cold and acute purulent rhinitis

Antihistamines for the common cold

Chinese medicinal herbs for the common cold

Corticosteroids for the common cold

Echinacea for preventing and treating the common cold

Garlic for the common cold

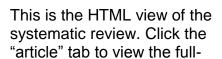
Heated, humidified air for the common cold

Honey for acute cough in children

Intranasal ipratropium bromide for the common cold

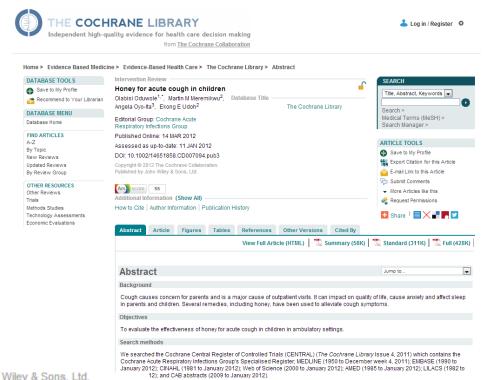
age: 1 <u>2 Ne</u>

These are the titles of the Systematic Reviews on "Common Cold & Cough". Click a title to view the full text of the review.

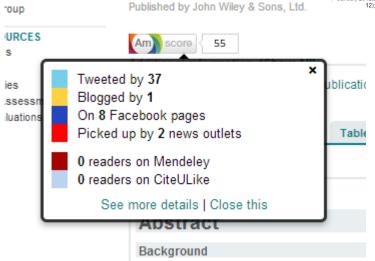


Wiley Online Library

text, or click Full (269K) to download the PDF version.

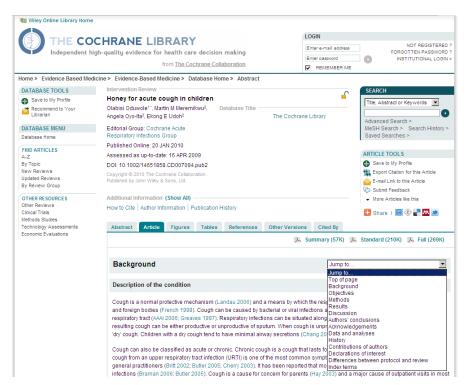


From this view you can also view the Article Metrics:



From this you can see if the review has been picked up by news outlets, tweeted or mentioned in a blog, or used in other social media.

Click on "see more details" to read all the tweets, blog posts, and even to see a geographical and demographic breakdown of who is tweeting about this review.



In the "article" view you can use the table of contents on the right-hand sidebar to jump to a particular section of the review. See the table of contents of the review in the left-hand menu – you can click on any section and jump to this part of the review.

b) Browsing by Cochrane Review Group

The Cochrane Systematic Reviews are prepared by authors who register titles with one of the 52 Cochrane Review Groups. Each Cochrane Review Group focuses on a specific topic area and is led by a Co-ordinating Editor(s) and an editorial team including a Managing Editor and Trials Search Coordinator. The Cochrane Review Groups provide authors with methodological and editorial support to prepare Cochrane Reviews and manage the editorial process, including peer review.



To browse systematic reviews by Review Group, from the home page, select "Browse by Review Group" from the Cochrane Reviews drop-down menu.

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Developmental, psychosocial, & learning problems (102)

nose 0 throat (196)

Expand =

Other Browse Options

OTHER BROWSE OPTIONS

New Reviews

Updated Reviews

A-Z: all Protocols and Reviews

A-Z: by Cochrane Review Group

Topics by Cochrane Review Group

A list of the Cochrane Review

Groups will appear. Click a

(reviews in progress) and

completed systematic

reviews.

group to view their protocols

collapse =

The Cochrane Library: Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews

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DOI: 10.1002/14651858

Reviews/Protocols listed by Cochrane Review Group

- Cochrane Acute Respiratory Infections Group
- Cochrane Airways Group
- Cochrane Anaesthesia Group
- Cochrane Bone, Joint and Muscle Trauma Group
- □ Cochrane Breast Cancer Group
- Cochrane Childhood Cancer Group
- Cochrane Colorectal Cancer Group
- Cochrane Consumers and Communication Group
- Cochrane Cystic Fibrosis and Genetic Disorders Group
- Cochrane Dementia and Cognitive Improvement Group Cochrane Depression, Anxiety and Neurosis Group
- Cochrane Developmental, Psychosocial and Learning Problems Group
- Cochrane Drugs and Alcohol Group
- Cochrane Ear, Nose and Throat Disorders Group
- Cochrane Effective Practice and Organisation of Care Group
- Cochrane Epilepsy Group
- Cochrane Eyes and Vision Group
- Cochrane Fertility Regulation Group
- Cochrane Gynaecological Cancer Group

Cochrane Haematological Malignancies Group







3. Planning your Search

Let's search for reviews and trials on the effectiveness of hypnotherapy to help people give up smoking.

It's best to search a database using keywords, rather than typing in whole questions. From this question there are two keywords:

Hypnotherapy Smoking

But what about synonyms for our terms? Try and think of other relevant keywords.

e.g.: hypnotherapy / hypnosis / hypnotise / hypnotised smoking / nicotine / tobacco



Boolean Logic

OR will search for articles containing any of the terms we chose. Use OR to combine synonyms, alternative spellings or related items

AND will search for articles which contain all of the terms we have chosen.

e.g.: hypnotherapy OR hypnosis OR hypnotise AND smoking OR nicotine OR tobacco



Truncation

Use the truncation tool (* at the start or end of a word) to broaden the number of variations around a word that your search will find. For example:

hypno* will search for hypnotherapy, hypnosis, hypnotise, etc.

Truncation can also be used at the beginning of the word For example *depress* will also find antidepressants, or within the word, e.g. isch*mic will find ischemic or ischaemic.



Other search tips:

- To search a phrase, enter it in quotes, e.g. "endometrial cancer"
- Plurals are searched automatically.
- Hyphens are valid characters. To search a term that may be hyphenated, enter both options.
- The database is case sensitive in some instances e.g. Bell's Palsy will not find Bell's palsy but bell's palsy will find Bell's P/palsy.

4. Simple Search



From the home page, in the search box in the top left-hand corner of the page, type the first keywords and hit return:

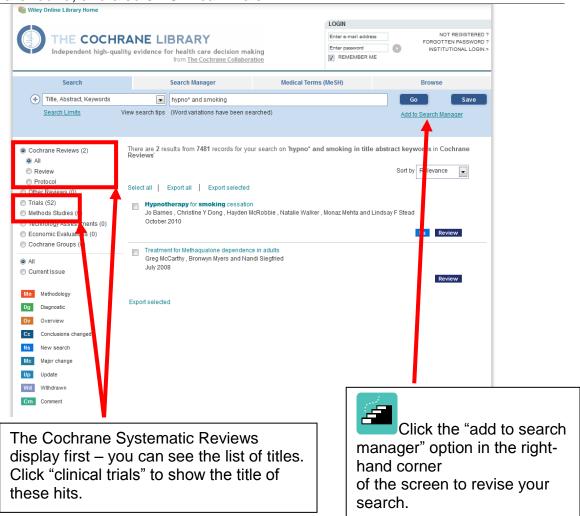
hypno* and smoking

SEARCH THE COCHRANE LIBRARY			
Title, Abstract or Keywords			
hypno* and smoking	GO		
or try an <u>Advanced Search</u>			

Your search will be automatically limited to "Title, Abstract or Keywords".

(You may find the search box is in the top right-hand corner of the page if you are already "in" the database).

The "Search Results" bar at the top of the page tells you how many hits there are in each section of the Cochrane Library. In this example, 2 Cochrane systematic Reviews are found, and also 52 Clinical Trials.



You'll find yourself in the "search manager" screen:

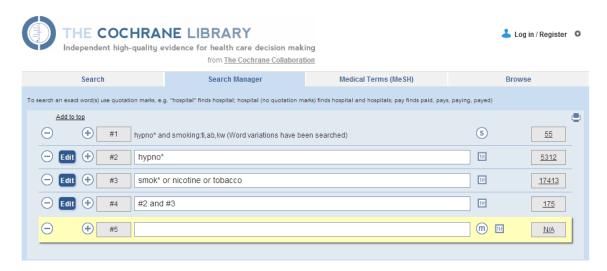


Try different combinations, and see if you get different / better results: In this screenshot,

hypno*

has been searched for afresh [type it in and click "go"] Synonyms for smoking have been added to the search.

smok* or nicotine or tobacco





To link the different lines together, use the number of each line you wish to combine, using AND:

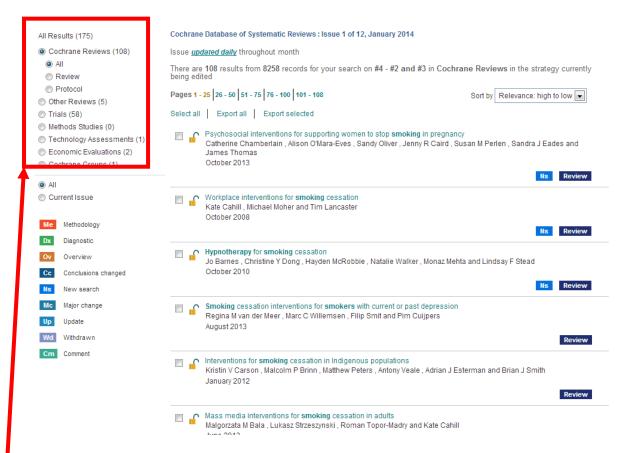
#2 and #3

And press "go" to get the combination of the two subjects – see how using more synonyms in your search gives you more hits.

Click the number of hits to view the results.

5. Viewing your results

Since the Cochrane Library is made up of several different databases, you may get results in some or all or none of them.



See how many hits you get in each section, and click on the link to see the brief records for these items.

Each section will let you see a different amount of information.

Cochrane Reviews

- Reviews are available in full text (HTML or PDF)
- Protocols are only available in brief format since these are unfinished reviews.

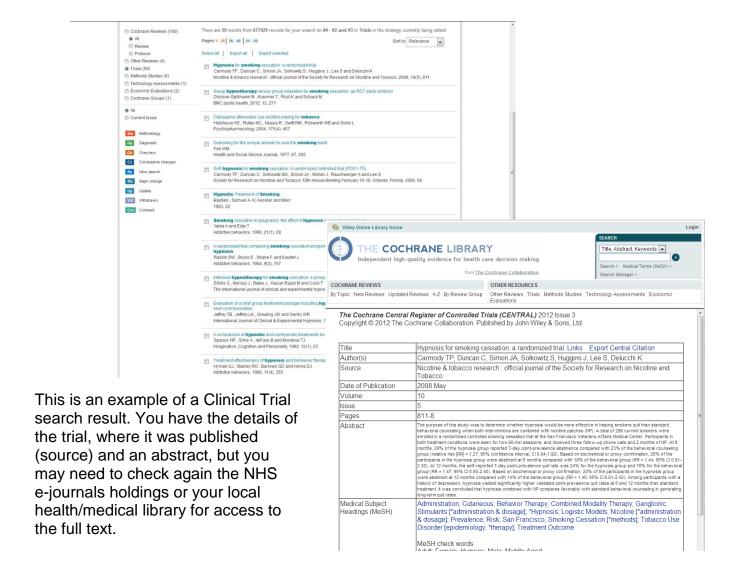
Other Reviews, Technology Assessments, Economic Evaluations

 You will generally find quite a detailed "structured" abstract, and details of where to find the original article as it was published

Trials

 Only an abstract is available from the Cochrane Library – you should check against the library catalogue (LibrarySearch) to see if the article is available to you electronically or in paper format.

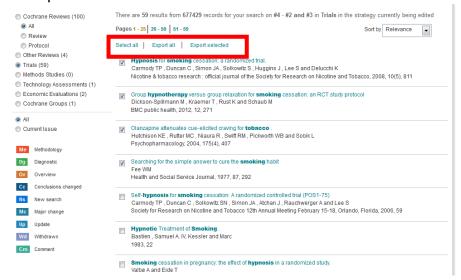
Each entry will be annotated to indicate whether it is new, withdrawn, has reached a new conclusion etc.



6. Selecting results for Printing or Saving

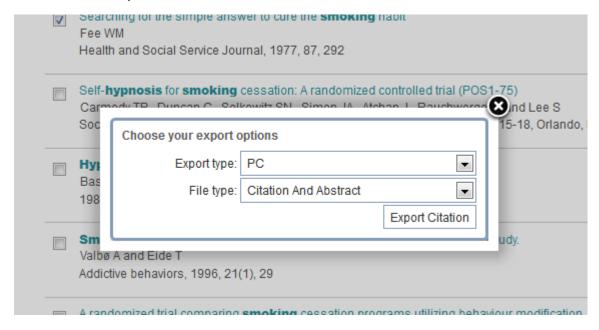


Check the boxes of the results you find most useful, and then click to "Export Selected Citations". Alternatively you can export all results if you prefer.





Make sure you chose "Abstract and citation" from the dropdown menu, select file type (PC or Macintosh or Unix or Linnux) as appropriate, and click "go" / "export citation" to create a plain text file which you can then save or print.



7. Searching more thoroughly – using MeSH headings

MeSH is the acronym for "Medical Subject Headings."



The MeSH controlled vocabulary is a distinctive feature of MEDLINE. It imposes uniformity and consistency to the indexing of biomedical literature. MeSH terms are arranged in a hierarchical categorized manner called MeSH Tree Structures and are updated annually.

Searching using MeSH allows you to overcome problems of spelling and terminology - especially when you might not be aware of different spellings or terminology! The correct MeSH term for your subject will find reviews and articles within Cochrane about your subject (rather than any article where it just happens to be mentioned) and will find results regardless of the terminology and spelling variations used by authors.





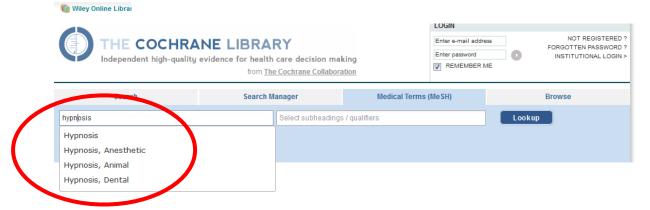
From the Advanced Search, or Search Manager screen you'll see the option to do a MeSH Search.



Click MeSH Search



Type your keyword hypnosis into the Search Box – you'll see a selection of possible MeSH that might be appropriate. Click the one that suits best, and then click "lookup".



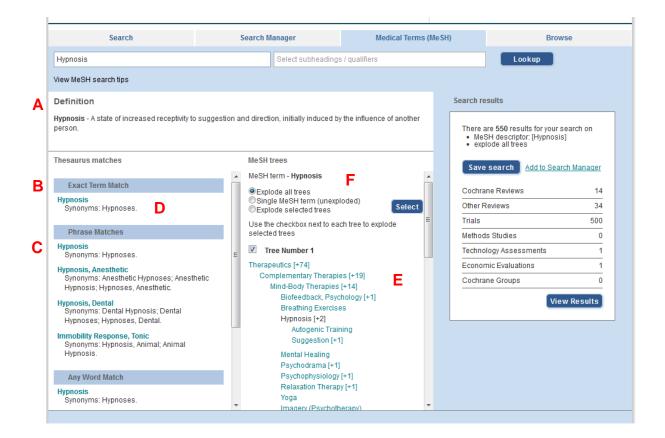
The next screen shows you where your chosen MeSH term appears in the thesaurus itself.

You'll see a definition of the term [A], and an "Exact Term Match" [B] and also a "Phrase Match" [C]. This will give you the opportunity to refine your search as you see fit. Under each term synonyms are also suggested [D].

The central column contains the MeSH trees. This show the context that your term in being considered in – you might need to scroll down to see all the options. In this example, "Hypnosis" appears in two sections: "Therapeutics" and also "Behavioural Disorders & Activities". [E]

Hypnosis also has narrower, more specific terms: "Autogenic Training" and "Suggestion".

You need to decide whether you would like to continue your search including the more specific terms (Autogenic Training and Suggestion) as well as the original term Hypnosis, or whether you prefer to search with just the MeSH you selected (Hypnosis) – a more limited search. – ie whether you want to "explode all trees". [F]



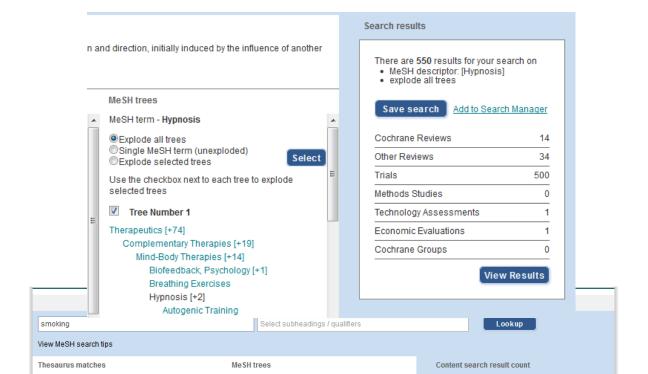


"Explode" is automatically selected - it's the default setting - and this broadens the search to include any narrower terms that branch off underneath your choice, as well as searching for your chosen term. Note that articles are always indexed under the most specific term available. The newest reviews will not have been indexed with MeSH yet, so the broadest search will involve simple keyword searches as well as MeSH searches.



Once you're happy with the term you've selected, click the "select" button. Then you can either "view results" or, to include this single search term in a more complex strategy, "Add to Search Manager".

(Save Search will only be necessary if you want to set up regular email alerts.)





You can now continue searching for MeSH terms for your other keywords.

Here "Smoking" has found 2 useful MeSH terms ("Smoking" and "Smoking Cessation"), however you can only choose one at a time. If another term is relevant, make a note of it and search for it again later.

Pick one, select it, and "add to search manager".



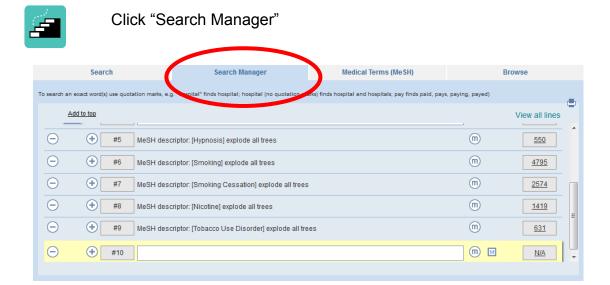
Carry on searching for the MeSH terms for your other keywords: smoking, tobacco, nicotine.

"Add to search manager" each time.

Our next step will be to combine these individual words using OR to find results containing any of the terms.

8. Using the Search Manager

You should now have results for a MeSH search for Hypnosis, and lots of MeSH searches for Smoking and other related terms, but they are still independent searches. You need to join them together.



You can now see all the searches you have done so far, and each one is numbered.

First we need to combine together the "smoking" searches: #3 for the keyword search, #6, #7, #8, #9 for the MeSH searches

Type #3 or #6 or #7 or #8 or #9 in next empty search box and click "go" – #10 now reflects all the possible terms for the "smoking" part of your search strategy.

To do the same for the Hypnosis searches type #2 or #4 #11 will now reflect the combined terms for "hypnosis"





It's essential to use the # to identify the lines of your search you wish to combine.



Now combine search #8 with search #3 (MeSH: hypnosis) using "and".

The results in #8 should have a good balance between "**sensitivity**" (ie, catching as much as possible about a topic, particularly if different words can mean the same thing) and "**precision**"/"**specificity**" (ie, catching only the results which are *truly* relevant)

Click the number of hits to view the results of your search.

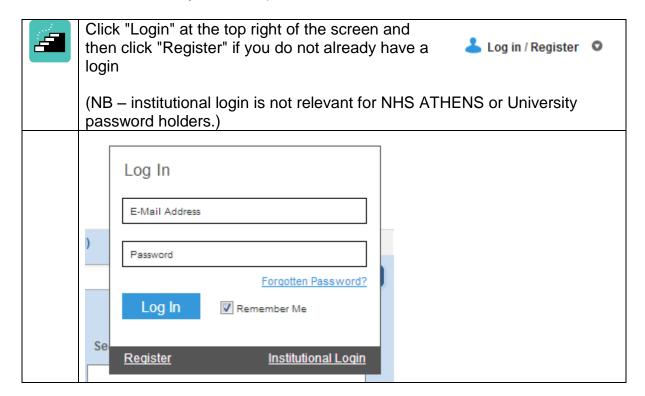


Search History

It is recommended to search a combination of both MeSH terms and keywords in the Cochrane Library...

9. Saving Articles & Searches

In order to save an article or a search you must first register with Wiley (publishers of the Cochrane Library database)



Complete the registration form.

Once logged in, you can save results and searches to your "Profile".

10. Help & Training

Free training on how to search databases is available from any NHS Library in the East of England.

For further help or to arrange a training session in Addenbrooke's, please contact:

Isla Kuhn, Eleanor Barker, or Veronica Phillips Cambridge University Medical Library

Email: librarytraining@medschl.cam.ac.uk

Phone: (01223) 336750

Web: http://library.medschl.cam.ac.uk

11. Useful links

Cochrane Collaboration Website http://www.cochrane.org
UK Cochrane Centre (Oxford) http://ukcc.cochrane.org